

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 2 and 4 without prejudice or disclaimer.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An automatic dispensing tip supply apparatus comprising:

a tip storing box whose bottom is slanted and has a tip collecting section in a lowermost part thereof to collect a plurality of dispensing tips, each of the tips having a large-diameter section and a small-diameter section, the small-diameter section capable of being inserted into an opening of the large-diameter section, a length of the small-diameter section being larger than a length of the large-diameter section, and the tip storing box including an outlet positioned higher than the tip collecting section;

a tip individually-sending mechanism configured to lift up the dispensing tips from the tip collecting section to the outlet;

a door mechanism including a door which is turnably supported at a top end thereof to close the outlet of the tip storing box from outside and a tip holding section which is provided on an inside of the door to horizontally hold the small-diameter section of one of the dispensing tips lifted up to the outlet by the tip individually-sending mechanism; and

a tip carry-out mechanism including a carry-out conveyor to carry the dispensing tips, which are dropped from the tip holding section when the door opens, out of the tip storing box through the outlet,

wherein the tip holding section of the door mechanism includes a V-shaped groove which is formed in the door to have a size to hold the small-diameter section of one of the dispensing

tips and a tip stopping piece to hold one of the tips lifted up to the outlet by the tip individually-sending mechanism within the V-shaped groove when the door closes, and

wherein the tip individually-sending mechanism includes a lifting plate which is driven up and down by a drive source, and the lifting plate has a top end face having a space enough to place only one dispensing tip and a tapered surface that descends toward an outside of the tip storing box.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The automatic dispensing tip supply apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the tip storing box includes a stopper on the bottom, and the stopper appropriately limits the number of dispensing tips that slide on the bottom.

4. (Canceled)